

SUMMARY REPORT 2006 District MCAS Results

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The district analysis of the 2006 MCAS data continues to identify the Franklin Public School System as a “**high performance**” district in all tests at all grade levels.

- All sixteen (16) tests, including three Long Composition administrations in grades 4, 7, and 10, reflect a “High” (80-89.9) or “Very High” (90-100) performance rating.
- Students in the aggregate (all students) continue to out perform the state on the same tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science/Technology Engineering.
- While subgroups (Special Education) in grades 3 and 4 performed on a par with the state subgroups in each of the tested areas. Test results for grades 5-10 surpassed state subgroup performances.
- Three Franklin schools (Helen Keller – grade 3 Math; Remington – grade 8 ELA; and Horace Mann – grade 8 Math/ELA) ranked among the highest performing schools in the state because of their high percentages of students scoring *Above Proficient* or *Advanced* on the 2006 MCAS Tests.
- 101 high school students were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship based on their Grade 10 MCAS performance. Students qualified for this scholarship by scoring, at the least: (a) in the *Advanced* category in English Language Arts or Mathematics and *Advanced* or *Proficient* in the other subject area on the grade 10 MCAS assessments; and, (b) in the top 25% of the students in the district on these tests. (See Appendix A)

The district also met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2006, which is a measure of the extent to which students in the district (as a whole and in certain subgroups) have demonstrated proficiency in ELA and mathematics. This is an important improvement indicator for Franklin.

- Franklin met the AYP expectations in the aggregate and all subgroups in grades 6-12.
- The district met AYP in the aggregate in grades 3-5 in both ELA and mathematics. However, the special education subgroups in grades 3-5 did not meet AYP in ELA or mathematics.
- For the past four years, the district had not met AYP as a result of subgroup performance in mathematics at the middle school. This low performance resulted in the district being identified as “In Need of Improvement – subgroups only.”
- Through a series of intensive initiatives, the middle school special education subgroup has met AYP expectations in 2006. The district must maintain this pattern of improvement on the 2007 tests for the “In Need of Improvement – subgroups only” status to be removed. The work begun at the middle school will serve as a model for sub-group initiatives at the elementary level.

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LONGITUDINAL DATA

Longitudinally, the district MCAS data for each grade level shows consistently high performance (“High” or “Very High” performance ratings) over 4-6 test administrations (2001-2006).

- While variations in performance ratings can range from 80-100 (20 “points”), the average range differential in district performance is 6.1 including all testing years within any grade or test.
- Within the last 3 testing cycles, the differential has been reduced to 3.6, showing far greater consistency within testing years. This data speaks to programmatic consistency among all schools within a grade level and common instructional expectations and methodologies use in classrooms, despite the fact that longitudinal data reflects a different testing cohort each year.
- A promising data trend (2 years of data) appears to be developing in grade 8 mathematics. From 2001 through 2004, the test results reflected a “moderate” performance rating (70.0-79.9) for each year. The 2005 and 2006 results reflect an increase in performance to a “high” rating for both years. The longitudinal data on this test confirms a continuous increase in performance from a low 74.2 to the current 82.1 proficiency index.

MCAS COHORT STUDIES

Data cohorts by graduation date were analyzed to monitor the performance ratings of students as they progress through the Franklin Public Schools.

- The performance ratings for all cohorts, including Cohort 2008 (current 10th grade class) through Cohort 2014 (current 4th grade class) reflect either an improvement in performance or maintenance of the cohort’s previous test’s performance level.
- It should be noted that the performance data for Cohort 2015 (current 3rd grade) is considered baseline performance data (year 1 of testing for students graduating in 2015) and will be used as such to measure progress over time.
- Dips in performance at various levels may reflect revisions to state frameworks and related realignments of learning standards by grade level, implementation of new materials and curricula, and/or general state performance trends in specific tests and grades. While proficiency indices may vary, the degree of consistency within a performance rating is the critical focus for a district.
- Franklin’s cohort data reflects consistency in student performance ratings over time or an increase in performance rating in the next test administration of the same subject test.

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IMPACT OF MCAS ON DISTRICT

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the MCAS tests have provided the impetus for several district initiatives and changes in practice since testing began in 1998. The district is required to complete two comprehensive plans on a yearly basis: The District Improvement Plan (DIP), and the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP).

State Expectations

- The DIP is an MCAS action plan identifying *HOW* the MCAS data will be analyzed and used to improve student achievement. It includes all activities, responsible parties, timelines, and resource allocations. The plan also includes general and specific instructional recommendations made by the Director of Instructional Services by grade and test (*See Appendix B*).
- The DCAP is intended to guide the district's activities in the following areas: accommodate various students' learning needs through professional development opportunities; provide instructional support services through regular education and after school programs; encourage parental and community involvement in educational programs, processes, and resources; review and revise district curricula to ensure MA frameworks alignment; and review school policies & discipline codes (*See Appendix C*).
- The district plan is used to guide individual building plans which are required by the state and submitted to the Director of Instructional Services for review and approval.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

MCAS has impacted curriculum development, instructional expectations and strategies, assessment practices, professional development, and the use of data to improve student achievement.

- District programs are now standards-based, rather than building- or district-based. A textbooks' table of contents is no longer appropriate to define grade level or course expectations, or "programs."
- Instructional materials and textbooks are rigorously analyzed to determine alignment with state learning expectations as no single resource will adequately meet all learning expectations. Franklin maintains vigilance in identifying gaps and providing teachers and students with sufficient supplemental materials and learning experiences to meet these state expectations.
- Classroom assessments must also be thoughtfully developed to reflect a marriage between classroom learning experiences and assessment practices. The Curriculum Teams' challenge is to identify where K-12 curriculum is at any given point in time relative to MCAS and district assessments, to recommend initiatives that address needs, and collaborate towards meeting those needs.

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Curriculum Review Process

MCAS has changed the process by which Franklin reviews programs. In the last five years all of the core frameworks (Mathematics, Science Technology Engineering, ELA, and History/Social Sciences) have undergone major revisions. This has a tremendous impact a district's ability to remain current in its articulation of standards-based curricula. As a result of the state's continuous review of and revisions to their frameworks, curriculum development and review must be a dynamic, fluid process. In the past districts, including Franklin, have implemented a 5-year curriculum review process where each core content area is in full review once every five years. This model can be ineffective in maintaining currency, adequate yearly progress, and high levels of student performance if content review cycles are not in synch with state changes.

- Franklin's Curriculum Review Process (*Appendix D*) has been modified to reflect these needs. Under this more fluid process, curriculum teams are able to incorporate modifications to the curricula on a yearly basis, with recommendations for updated materials, assessments, or professional development workshops, courses, and training.

Examples:

- Grade 8 Social Studies curriculum change from *Civics* to *World History I* during the 2005-2006 school year and implementation in 2006-2007.
- District-wide grade 4 pilot of materials from 4 major publishers for *Regions of the United States, Canada, and Mexico*.

Data-Driven Decisions

The use of data (particularly MCAS data) to drive decisions has become an expected and common practice in Franklin.

- Comprehensive analyses at the district level provide guidance and recommendations for instructional and programmatic improvements through test item analyses.
- This practice has identified areas of concern, ranging from generic recommendations like "increased familiarity to and strategies for answering Open Response Questions" to identification of low performance on specific grade level learning standards or content strands.
- These analyses are used by curriculum teams to make continuous curricular revisions and program recommendations.
- Analyses are used by building principals to develop grade level instructional goals.

District Initiatives

MCAS and district data analyses have also been responsible for several district initiatives.

- Low performance levels on the grade 8 mathematics test initiated a grades 6-8 math review resulting in the purchase of a new middle school math series, *IMPACT*.
- The district provided intensive on-going professional development to support the implementation process.
- An aggressive response to not meeting AYP (middle school mathematics subgroups), led to the formation of a special/general education math study group during the 2005-2006 school year.

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- Both initiatives have increased student performance in both the aggregate and subgroups and the district made AYP in 2006.

Professional Development

Professional development in the district reflect needs identified by district personnel and supported by MCAS analyses.

- Graduate courses, content workshops, and instructional workshops in critical thinking, differentiating instruction, project-based learning, and writing across the curriculum – to name a few – are offered to teachers based upon data analysis.
- Teachers meet by grade level (building-based and district-wide) to discuss MCAS data and collaborate on improving student performance and instructional practice.
- Recommendations are made and acted upon for future professional development workshops and trainings.

Student Performance

Student learning and achievement is an essential focus of all MCAS activities. Data analyses, program and curricular revisions, professional development activities, and district/building plans all funnel into the ultimate goal – increased student achievement at all levels.

- The state requires districts to develop plans for increasing performance for students who score below 220 – *Warning (See Appendix E)*.
- This year, the district has developed a similar ISSP for any student who scores in the Low Needs Improvement performance level (220-228). (*See Appendix E*)
- This initiative is not common practice in the state, but Franklin believes that it is important to identify and support students who MAY be at risk of failing future MCAS tests.
- This initiative will also include the Science Technology/Engineering MCAS tests with the spring 2007 test administration.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY CHANGES

Change in ELA/Mathematics Passing Requirements

On Tuesday, October 24, 2006, the State Board of Education voted to raise the passing requirements for high school Competency Determination from 220 to 240 for the class of 2010 (current 9th grade students). Students who do not score a 240 on the Mathematics and ELA MCAS tests will be required to take an additional test distributed by the DOE AND complete a “specific regiment of courses” to qualify for a high school diploma. The state will be reviewing this regulation change no later than 2008. This change in the passing score will impact Franklin High School on a number of levels.

- The current practice of developing Individual Student Success Plans for students who score below 230 will be inadequate. Administrators are identifying 9th grade students who scored between 230 and 240 on the 8th grade ELA and Mathematics tests.
- Student data will be shared with appropriate teachers for review and instructional support.

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- Beyond a retest situation, students who do not perform at or above 240 will be required to take additional math or English courses in order to graduate. Students are currently required to take/pass four years of English and three years of mathematics at Franklin High School.
- Upon clearer direction from the state clarifying “specific regiment of courses,” the mathematics department will need to review the current mathematics course offerings at the high school in order to meet these “regiment of course” recommendations.

Addition of High School Science MCAS Competency Test

The addition of a Science/Technology Engineering MCAS test at the high school is another major change in the testing cycle.

- Beginning with the class of 2010 (current 9th graders) all students must pass a Science MCAS test, joining Math and ELA as graduation requirements.
- The competency determination for the science test will remain at a minimum score of 220.
- The state offers several test options for high schools in science – Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Technology Engineering.
- Franklin High School will be offering Biology to students who are taking this course in grade 9 or 10. Offering one test option provides a more concentrated focus on instruction and resources.
- A passing score, regardless of the year taken, will meet the competency determination for graduation in science.
- As an additional example of the need for a fluid curriculum review process, the high school members of the Science Curriculum Team have reviewed the new Biology framework learning standards, and are in the process of revising curriculum and course assessments.
- This past summer, Biology textbooks were purchased in anticipation of additional student enrollment in this course.
- High school members of the Science Curriculum Team have recommended the investigation of a two-year CP Biology course, based upon student needs. This course would complete the frameworks Biology content requirements over a two-year period as well as related mathematics and science skill development.